



# Water Development Commission

6920 YELLOWTAIL ROAD

TELEPHONE: (307) 777-7626

CHEYENNE, WY 82002

FAX: (307) 777-6819

Lawrence M. Besson  
Director**MEMORANDUM**A. Lee Arrington  
Bill Bensei  
Dan S. Budd  
Mitchel Cottonair  
Floyd Field  
Dick Geving  
George Jost  
Anne MacKinnon  
William Steward  
Robert Yemington

**To:** Attendees, CBM Operators Meeting

**From:** Mike Besson, Director  
Wyoming Water Development Commission

**Subject:** Information Related to North Platte River Basin Demand and Water Availability

**Date:** March 30, 2006

The demand associated with maintaining Wyoming's historical irrigation practices due to the 2001 settlement of the Nebraska v Wyoming lawsuit and the potential Wyoming demand associated with the proposed endangered species Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and the Pathfinder Modification Project together total approximately 33,000 acre-feet of water on an average annual basis. Prior to settlement of the Nebraska v Wyoming lawsuit, hydrological analysis related to the Deer Creek Project indicated that the river basin would yield an additional 8,000-10,000 acre feet of water. With settlement of the lawsuit, the North Platte River is now a fully appropriated basin and the prospect of delivering Powder River basin CBM co-produced water to the North Platte is intriguing in that it would enable Wyoming to temporarily meet these new demands and allow time for the state to develop more sustainable water sources. The introduction of imported water of quantities greater than 33,000 acre-feet of water would also provide a degree of drought protection for other types of existing water use in the basin.

In addition to water supplied by the three state sponsored projects, the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program also is seeking an additional 50,000 -70,000 acre-feet of water from those willing to market water for the recovery effort. While timing and the temporary nature of the availability of CBM co-produced water is an issue, use of this resource would allow the program to proceed and time to secure more permanent water supplies capable of providing water during subsequent Program increments.

However, time is of the essence. The following is necessary for the initiation and expedition of the feasibility analysis:

1. A configuration of a "producers" plan to collect CBM co-produced water and the location or locations at which water be injected into the proposed "transbasin" pipeline;
2. An affirmation of a maximum amount of water and the length of time producers would agree to supply water to meet existing North Platte River basin demands;
3. Identification of water quality testing protocols and the anticipated level of "total dissolved solids" at each injection point;
4. Although the assimilative capacity of the North Platte River is sufficient to discharge CBM directly to the river and still maintain the historical uses in the basin, an indication of industry's willingness to treat CBM water to address water quality concerns and reduced opportunity as it relates to assimilative capacity;
5. In the case that where CBM co-produced water is only capable of meeting 25,000 acre-feet of water or less, the identification of a site to store, treat and re-regulate CBM co-produced water to maximize the benefit for Wyoming and Wyoming water users; and
6. Names of contacts that have the authority to represent participating CBM producers;

If this information is available or can be generated quickly, the hope is that the feasibility study will have progressed sufficiently to generate an adequate estimate of engineering design and construction costs for consideration for funding by the legislature during the 2007 General Session.

Cc: Governor Dave Freudenthal